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APPLICATION NO.	FILING DATE	FIRST NAMED INVENTOR	ATTORNEY DOCKET NO.	CONFIRMATION NO.
10/780,613	02/19/2004	Mark Julian Roberts	06376P USA	2024

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EXAMINER

DOERRLER, WILLIAM CHARLES

ART UNIT PAPER NUMBER

3744

DATE MAILED: 11/28/2005

Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

Office Action Summary

Application No.

10/780,613

Applicant(s)

ROBERTS, MARK JULIAN

Examiner

William C. Doerrler

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-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --

Period for Reply

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 3 MONTH(S) OR THIRTY (30) DAYS, WHICHEVER IS LONGER, FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133). Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

Status

- 1) ☐ Responsive to communication(s) filed on ____.
- 2a) ☐ This action is **FINAL**. 2b) ☒ This action is non-final.
- 3) ☐ Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

Disposition of Claims

- 4) ☒ Claim(s) 1-20 is/are pending in the application.
- 4a) Of the above claim(s) ____ is/are withdrawn from consideration.
- 5) ☐ Claim(s) ____ is/are allowed.
- 6) ☒ Claim(s) 1-20 is/are rejected.
- 7) ☐ Claim(s) ____ is/are objected to.
- 8) ☐ Claim(s) ____ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

Application Papers

- 9) ☐ The specification is objected to by the Examiner.
- 10) ☒ The drawing(s) filed on 19 February 2004 is/are: a) ☒ accepted or b) ☐ objected to by the Examiner.
Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).
Replacement drawing sheet(s) including the correction is required if the drawing(s) is objected to. See 37 CFR 1.121(d).
- 11) ☐ The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner. Note the attached Office Action or form PTO-152.

Priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119

- 12) ☐ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
- a) ☐ All b) ☐ Some * c) ☐ None of:
1. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
 2. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. ____.
 3. ☐ Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).

* See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.

Attachment(s)

- 1) ☒ Notice of References Cited (PTO-892)
- 2) ☐ Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948)
- 3) ☒ Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO-1449 or PTO/SB/08)
Paper No(s)/Mail Date 10-29-04, 8-2-04, 2-17-04
- 4) ☐ Interview Summary (PTO-413)
Paper No(s)/Mail Date. ____.
- 5) ☐ Notice of Informal Patent Application (PTO-152)
- 6) ☐ Other: ____.

DETAILED ACTION

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 102

The following is a quotation of the appropriate paragraphs of 35 U.S.C. 102 that form the basis for the rejections under this section made in this Office action:

A person shall be entitled to a patent unless –

(b) the invention was patented or described in a printed publication in this or a foreign country or in public use or on sale in this country, more than one year prior to the date of application for patent in the United States.

Claims 1,3 and 4 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) as being anticipated by the '900 British patent from the IDS.

The '900 British patent shows a natural gas liquefying method with uses two refrigeration systems with one of the systems branching a liquid refrigerant to expand to provide further refrigeration to the system. It is noted that the claim does not specify which of the first and second temperature ranges is higher.

Claims 1-5,8,10,13,14,16 and 18 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) as being anticipated by Stockmann et al (6,253,574).

Stockmann et al shows a natural gas liquefying apparatus which uses three refrigerants for three different temperature ranges. Each of the three refrigerant systems have a separator (P11,L7 or S8) which derive a liquid for further expansion and thus refrigeration. The claims do not specify which temperature range is higher or lower than the others. Thus one of the refrigerant systems achieves an auxiliary refrigerant with a vaporization temperature above the lowest temperature of one of the other refrigerant systems.

Claims 1-7,9-11,13-15,17 and 18 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) as being anticipated by DeMarco (3,413,816).

DeMarco shows a natural gas liquefying apparatus which uses three refrigerants (propane, ethylene and methane) for three different temperature ranges. Each of the three refrigerant systems have a split for the compressed and cooled refrigerant (such as 60 and 77 in the ethylene cycle) to produce an auxiliary refrigerant for each refrigerant and thus auxiliary refrigeration. The claims do not specify which temperature range is higher or lower than the others. Thus one of the refrigerant systems achieves an auxiliary refrigerant with a vaporization temperature above the lowest temperature of one of the other refrigerant systems. This applies to the pressures of claims 4 and 6 as well. Since the first and second temperature ranges are not clearly defined, the first and second pressures associated with each are also assignable to either stream. In regard to claim 11, staying with the ethylene system, one stream returns through line 119, is compressed 121 and cooled 123, and recombined with an earlier separated stream. The returning streams pass through heat exchanger 67, which is seen to provide cooling for the compressed refrigerant passing through line 73.

Double Patenting

The nonstatutory double patenting rejection is based on a judicially created doctrine grounded in public policy (a policy reflected in the statute) so as to prevent the unjustified or improper timewise extension of the "right to exclude" granted by a patent and to prevent possible harassment by multiple assignees. A nonstatutory obviousness-type double patenting rejection is appropriate where the conflicting claims are not identical, but at least one examined application claim is not patentably distinct from the reference claim(s) because the examined application claim is either anticipated by, or would have been obvious over, the reference claim(s). See, e.g., *In re Berg*, 140 F.3d 1428, 46 USPQ2d 1226 (Fed. Cir. 1998); *In re Goodman*, 11 F.3d 1046, 29 USPQ2d 2010 (Fed. Cir. 1993); *In re Longi*, 759 F.2d 887, 225 USPQ 645 (Fed. Cir.

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1985); In re Van Ornum, 686 F.2d 937, 214 USPQ 761 (CCPA 1982); In re Vogel, 422 F.2d 438, 164 USPQ 619 (CCPA 1970); and In re Thorington, 418 F.2d 528, 163 USPQ 644 (CCPA 1969).

A timely filed terminal disclaimer in compliance with 37 CFR 1.321(c) or 1.321(d) may be used to overcome an actual or provisional rejection based on a nonstatutory double patenting ground provided the conflicting application or patent either is shown to be commonly owned with this application, or claims an invention made as a result of activities undertaken within the scope of a joint research agreement.

Effective January 1, 1994, a registered attorney or agent of record may sign a terminal disclaimer. A terminal disclaimer signed by the assignee must fully comply with 37 CFR 3.73(b).

Claims 1-3,5,7-11 and 13-20 are rejected on the ground of nonstatutory obviousness-type double patenting as being unpatentable over claims 1-23 of U.S. Patent No. 6,742,357. Although the conflicting claims are not identical, they are not patentably distinct from each other because one of ordinary skill in the art would recognize that the providing "additional refrigeration" from the second or third refrigerant streams of the earlier patent includes forming an auxiliary refrigerant stream. The later claims of the patent claim the separate streams (without calling it an auxiliary stream) and the recombining of the separated and main refrigerant streams. It would have been obvious to an ordinary practitioner in the art at the time of applicant's invention that the "additional refrigeration" in the earlier claims is derived from splitting the refrigerant stream to provide multiple temperature levels from one compressed stream.


Conclusion

The prior art made of record and not relied upon is considered pertinent to applicant's disclosure. Krieger, Carr, Fredheim et al, and Mandler show natural gas liquefying systems which split the compressed refrigerant stream.

Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to William C. Doerrler whose telephone number is (571) 272-4807. The examiner can normally be reached on Monday-Friday 6:30-4:30.

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Cheryl Tyler can be reached on (571) 272-4834. The fax phone number for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is 571-273-8300.

Information regarding the status of an application may be obtained from the Patent Application Information Retrieval (PAIR) system. Status information for published applications may be obtained from either Private PAIR or Public PAIR. Status information for unpublished applications is available through Private PAIR only. For more information about the PAIR system, see <http://pair-direct.uspto.gov>. Should you have questions on access to the Private PAIR system, contact the Electronic Business Center (EBC) at 866-217-9197 (toll-free).


William C Doerrler
Primary Examiner
Art Unit 3744

WCD